

Doors That Lead To Magic

by Far Away In Wonderland

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Summary: Simon was five when he fell down the rabbit hole into Wonderland and met the Mad Hatter. Only that Wonderland was a mansion in Manhattan and the Mad Hatter the eccentric High Warlock of Brooklyn. Also, Simon believed that Alice never had to deal with so much glitter. Part One of "The Mundane and the Warlock".

Doors That Lead To Magic

AN: My first Shadowhunters fic.

I read the first three books of TMI years ago and couldn't remember much, so this fic is based mainly on the TV show by Freeform. I really hope that I got the characters right, though :/

English isn't my native tongue and as of yet this fic isn't beta-ed, so I hope it won't be that much of a torture to read through it :D

* * *

><p>Everything was grey.</p>

At least that was how it seemed to Simon as he stared out of the window of their flat as the rain kept falling down from the sky. A constant downpour that drummed against his window, creating an ever-changing sound to which melody only Simon was privy to. There was so much rain falling from the sky that he couldn't even see the neighbouring house across the street. Just a grey mist that became denser and denser the further he looked, until it became an impenetrable wall.

Thousands of people could have passed by in these moments or none, Simon wouldn't have known. He could be the only person left on this planet, but the rain would keep that secret from him until it was

gone.

Alone.

That was fitting. Loneliness was what clawed at Simon's every waking moment. Tried to overwhelm him when he didn't pay attention, when the weight of what had happened tried to crush him into nothing but dust.

Simon was only five, but he knew what loneliness felt like. Passers-by on the street, the nice lady behind the register at the book shop, Miss Davis from the kindergarten — they all looked at the brown-haired child with the glasses that made his chocolate-brown eyes look even more bigger and saw the emptiness in his eyes — the lack, the void.

Five-years-olds shouldn't be devoid. They should be full of brightness, hope and endless laughter as they conquered the world with their make-believe.

It was three weeks ago when the man with the scythe came and destroyed every make-believe Simon ever constructed. Three weeks ago when his mother had come into his room, tears streaming down her face, her eyes red from all the crying and told him that his father would never come back. That he was with the angels in Heaven now.

Simon was five, not stupid. He knew that it meant that his father would never come back to tuck him into bed and tell him stories of far-away lands that they would one day travel to. Never coming back to play ball with him, even though Simon was terrible at it. Never coming back to buy comics with him, going through every single issue until they found one that they could both agree on.

Simon hadn't read a single one since three weeks ago.

There had been no superhero to save his dad. No Batman, no Superman, no Avengers.

"Simon." He turned around from where he was staring outside to find his mother standing in the doorway. She didn't look good, Simon noticed. Her hair was sticking in every direction and she didn't even care! Before — before she would always take care that she looked good.

'_You never know when you meet someone important,'_ she had said when Simon had complained why he had to comb his hair if they were just going to the book store. His dad had just laughed and told him to do as his mother said.

"Yeah?" Simon grunted. That was his new way of communication. Non-committal sounds that those around him could interpret however they wanted. It made it easier for him. Just keep quiet and let the others do the thinking and talking.

"You haven't left the room for over a week," his mother told him and her voice took that tone that she always used when she was thinking Simon should do something that he wasn't willing to do. This mixture of gentleness and firmness, with which she had coaxed him since he started to understand what she was saying.

"I don't wanna," Simon pouted. Why should he go outside? There was nothing outside that was worth his attention. Outside was where his father had gone to Heaven. Outside was where people looked at him like he was broken "unfixable. He wanted to stay in his room forever until the aching hurt in his chest would go away. Until the door opened and his father would walk into his room as if nothing had happened.

"Simon, please?" his mother said and crouched down so that her face was on the same height as his. "I know that it's difficult, but you can't stay in you room forever." Why? "We're all hurting, but we must try to move on. Rebecca's hurt as well, but she's at Stacy's house because friends friends help you to heal." Maybe the sadness had made his mother a little bit stupid, because she should know that Simon didn't have any friends he wanted to heal him. There was Vince with whom he sometimes discussed about his newest comics or Rachel that he sometimes liked when she wasn't doing some stupid girl stuff, but he didn't want them right now.

"You don't have to go to someone," his mother, obviously sensing his hesitation, said. "Just go outside when the rain stops, hmm?" She rummaged in her pockets until she held a crumpled 5 Dollar bill in her hand.

"That's for you," she said and smiled, but her eyes still looked sad. "When the sun's out again you can go and buy yourself a new comic, how about that?" His mother looked at him so hopeful that Simon couldn't bring himself to tell her that he didn't want any comics. So he just smiled at her and his mother smiled back.

Two broken souls trying to convince each other that they weren't broken.

"That's my boy," Simon's mother said and tousled his hair before she stood up. When she was standing in the doorway, she turned around.

"I love you, Simon. So much."

"Love you, too, mom," Simon mumbled, resolutely staring on the ground. He only dared to look up when he heard the click of the door falling into its lock. He looked at the bill in his hand and then outside, where the rain was still falling against the window, creating complicated patterns that vanished within seconds before Simon could even commit parts of them to his memory. There was only silence, interrupted by the rapid tap-tap of the raindrops hammering against every surface.

And all of a sudden Simon couldn't stand it anymore. Couldn't stand his room and the silence that penetrated it all around. It felt like he couldn't breathe anymore, like he would go crazy if he would stay in here any second longer.

Maybe his mother's suggestion wasn't that bad after all.

Slowly Simon opened his door and peeked out on the hallway. The door to his parents "his mother's" room was closed which meant that she was in it. She did that a lot since his father had gone; staying in her room and only coming out to take care of Rebecca and

him.

She definitely wouldn't want him to go outside when it was this rainy. But Simon was nothing if not determined. He would use his good jacket â€“ the one where water drops just bounced off â€“ and his rubber boots, so that he wouldn't get wet. Then his mother would have nothing to complain about. After all, she wanted him to go outside.

Simon nodded to himself as he found the simple solution for a possible problem like only a child could and slowly tiptoed over the hallway to where the jackets were hanging. Luckily he and Rebecca had their own little checkroom where their stuff was, so Simon had no problem reaching his jacket. He continued to slip in his rubber boots and â€“ very carefully and slowly, so that his mother wouldn't notice â€“ opened the front door. When the gap between door and frame was wide enough, he slipped through.

The instant Simon stepped on the street the rain was already pouring down on him. He had to wait a few seconds for the fogging on his glasses to vanish before he was even able to see anything. Looking down on the dollar bill in his hand, Simon decided that it probably would be better if he put it in his pocket and did so.

His mother had given him the money to buy himself a new comic. Simon wasn't in the mood for something to read, but he knew that his mother would be very angry if he came home with sweets instead. She would lecture him about health and talk about all the gross stuff that sweets would do to his teeth.

Simon shuddered. No, he definitely didn't want that.

Maybe he could buy a comic and read it when he was in the mood for it? That sounded like something he could do. Maybe one of the less expensive ones and from the rest he could get himself some sweets? If he ate them before coming home his mother would never know.

Assured that his new plan would work in his favour, Simon started his way to the book store that was only a few streets away. His parents knew the owner since they had moved here, so they had no problems with him going there all by himself, although Simon wasn't sure his mother would allow to let him go when it was this rainy outside.

But, hey, at least he was outside like she had wanted, wasn't he?

Furthermore, Ms Reynold, the owner of the book store always had sweets for him, so that was another plus point.

Spirits lifted by how conveniently everything fell into place, Simon walked along the street, the loneliness that had clawed at him only a while ago pushed at the back of his mind. There weren't much people on the street; only a few passing Simon by as he made his way to the book store, maybe wondering what a young child was doing outside alone in this weather. But they didn't care enough to ask â€“ to make sure that the boy was okay â€“ so Simon walked his way unbothered by the few adults around him, which suited him quite fine.

It was only a few metres away from Ms Reynold's store when Simon

looked up and saw a young girl running across the street. He creased his brow in confusion as she only wore a skinny jeans and a red t-shirt, definitely not something you wore on a day like this. His mother would have his hide if he tried to leave the house like this!

Maybe she lost her jacket? Simon wondered, _and is now running home to get a new one?_ Question answered, Simon was about to continue his way when a thought began nagging at him.

What if it's a long way home and she gets a cold? Shouldn't he at least offer his help? His mother said that he should always try to be as helpful as he could, because the universe had its way of paying back your deeds tenfold.

But the universe was stupid anyway, because Simon had never done something that would make him deserve of getting his father taken away. But only a few steps after that resolution, his guilty conscience began to bother him.

He would just ask really fast and then continue on his way.

The girl meanwhile had vanished into a side street into which Simon carefully peeked. There was no sight of her. Slowly, Simon stepped forward "one step after another" and squinted his eyes in order to better see his surroundings through the falling rain.

"Hello?" he shouted. "Are you there?" No answer. "You don't have a jacket" and "I wanted to ask you if you need help? My mother says you get colds if you don't wear enough and colds can get really nasty." He felt a little stupid as he stood there and shouted into an apparently empty side street, but at least he had offered his help. Not his fault if the girl wasn't there anymore.

Simon came to a standstill right next to a garbage can and was about to turn around when a breeze of wind blew his cap off his head. Panicked Simon ran after the piece of cloth. Luckily for him the breeze wasn't that strong, so that the cap lowered itself slowly on the ground only a few metres away from where Simon had been standing. Relieved that he hadn't lost it (and by extension hadn't made his mother angry) Simon picked the cloth up and put it back on his head.

His jaw dropped, though, when he looked up and saw a purple rectangle hovering right in front of him. Hastily, he scrabbled a few inches back, his breath fast and sharp and his pulse rising, but when nothing happened he calmed down again. Slow and carefully Simon stepped forward again until he stood right in front of the object.

"Wow," he mouthed as he watched the different shades of purple oozing back and forth, creating shapes and intermingling with each other in a serene calmness. Simon had absolutely no idea what that thing was, but it was definitely cool!

Maybe I can even touch it? Gently, Simon stretched out his hand. The nearer to the thing he came the more _alive_ the air around his hand felt. Like everything was loaded with electricity that made the hair on his skin stand up.

Finally, his hand touched the purple. And everything around him vanished. All around him blackness. Simon wanted to scream but before even a single tone could leave his lips, the blackness receded and was replaced by completely new surroundings.

Simon could hear his heart pounding in his ears. He was terrified and scared and he just wanted to cry, because that thing had done something to him; had taken him somewhere; but he just couldn't bring himself to shed a tear. He had already cried so much over the last few weeks and it hadn't changed anything for him. Crying was useless.

So he pushed the terror that was creeping into his mind as far away as possible, ignored the rapid beating of his heart and slowly walked forward, ready to run back at any given moment. The hallway he walked through was silent. Even the air around Simon didn't seem to move, not even a single breeze. The floor was outlaid with dark wood that reflected the light that shone from the expensive looking chandeliers hanging above. The walls were painted in a noble looking red, the kind of which kings and queens wore in some of the pictures Simon had seen when their kindergarten class had visited the local museum.

There were pictures on the wall as well. Their frame was made of gold that shone bright as if something was illuminating it from behind. The strands of gold were interwoven into intricately patterns that Simon was unable to follow as they seemed to move right in front of his eyes, even though the moment he tried to concentrate on a certain point, they would stop. The scenes that the pictures showed looked like the motives Simon could remember from the church he and his family had visited sometimes. There were angels, with wings of the purest white, holding swords and expression full of determination as they fought against terrible monsters, with claws instead of fingers, tails, forked tongues and horns on their forehead.

They were all painted in such vivid detail that Simon had the feeling that they were real â€“ that their eyes were following him as he moved further along the hallway. It made the hair on his back stand up and suddenly regretted that he hadn't just turned around and walked back when he still had the chance.

Every now and then the pictures wouldn't show angels and demons, but persons. Women in beautiful gowns of varying colours and styles or men in uniform, their gaze cool as they appraised the onlooker. Simon liked these pictures better, especially the one with the woman that seemed to smile at him with an apple in her hand. She looked nice; he didn't need to be afraid of her.

The doors in the walls were all closed and Simon didn't dare to open one and peek behind it. After all, he didn't know if there was anyone behind it. So he just continued following the hallway and hoped that it would lead him somewhere where he could get back.

“Mom will be so angry!” he thought and tried to avoid thinking about how worried she must be by now. But maybe there was still a chance that he would get back in time and she wouldn't notice that he had been away?

Finally, there was one door that stood ajar. The room within looked like one of these pictures Simon had seen in some of his mother's

magazines about houses of rich people. A library with so many books! There were so much that Simon doubted that anyone could read all of them. Enchanted by the sight of so many books, Simon forgot all about his caution and just walked forwards, takin in the sight of it.

He held out his hand and let it roam over the back of the books, feeling the different materials they were made out of.

'_You can tell much about a book by its cover,'_ Ms Reynolds had told him one, _'if they have been loved, cherished, taken out of their shelves again and again so that their owner could immerse himself into the stories they have to tell. A book tells so much about its owner.'_ Maybe you could only feel it if you owned a bookstore, but beside the nice feeling of leather and other materials underneath his fingers, Simon couldn't sense anything else. But he liked it, nevertheless.

"Now, who are you?" The sudden voice scared Simon so much that he fell on the ground because he tried to turn around so sudden that he lost his balance. Before him stood a man in vibrant clothing of so many colours that it hurt Simon's eyes just by looking at it. He looked like the people that lived in China Town, so maybe he was Chinese? Or Asian? Simon couldn't tell, for he was in equal measures terrified and fascinating by the man's eyes that shone in a bright gold and actually looked like cats'!

"Can't you talk?" the man continued speaking. "You are a child, aren't you? A mundane child, I might add. You're probably terrified. What have I done to deserve this, mh? I hate children; they're so needy and useless. Maybe you like this?" The man snapped with his fingers and suddenly blue mist engulfed his hand from which fireworks in many different colours sprung forth. "Did that help? Are you still afraid? I've heard children like that kind of thing."

"Are you an angel?" Simon blurted out. "'Cause the paintings outside had all angels in them and I went through this purple thingy and you can do magic. Mom said that angel live in Heaven, but you must have houses, don't you? Is this your angel house? It's pretty nice, though some pictures are creepy." Simon paused and then looked at the angel with pleading eyes. "Can I see my daddy? Mom says he's here now."

Something seemed to change. Simon couldn't pinpoint what exactly, but he could feel it in the very air around them. The carelessness and frivolity that had engulfed the angel like a second set of clothes suddenly vanished and was replaced by something Simon couldn't name.

"Ah, child," the angel replied and his previously joyous voice had taken a sadder tone. "I'm sorry, but I'm not an angel." Simon's face fell. He had had such high hopes and now they were destroyed right in front of his eyes.

"You aren't?" Simon said in small voice. "So, I can't see my dad?"

"I'm afraid you can't," the man said. For a short moment it looked like he wanted to lay a hand on Simon's shoulder, but Simon must have been wrong, because nothing happened. The man just stood there barely an arm length away -and stared Simon with his cat eyes.

"I'm sorry."

"'s okay," Simon mumbled. It really wasn't, but of what use would it be to annoy the magic man with something that he couldn't do? It had been a small hope only, but it had been hope nevertheless and it always hurt to lose it.

"I should probably bring you back," the man interrupted the silence that had engulfed them. "And erase your memories. The Clave would have my hide if they knew that a mundane boy was here."

"No, please don't, Mister Magic," Simon pleaded. "I don't want to forget the magic. Please?" He put on his best puppy eyes as his mother liked to describe them and directed them at the man.

Beat. Silence. Then.

"I won't," the magician replied. "But promise me you won't tell anybody?" Simon nodded furiously. "And don't go looking for portals â€“ the purple things," he corrected himself when he saw Simon's quizzing look, "becauseâ€¦because you shouldn't and I'm an adult, capiche?" Simon nodded again.

"Right, then let's get you back where you came from," the man sighed and held out his hand.

Simon grabbed it and held on tightly.

* * *

><p>Magnus tried to squash the feeling of warmth that was surging through his chest when he saw the relieved mother surging towards her child and embracing it like she never wanted to let it go again. Magnus could understand that sentiment, though. If the woman knew what her son had been up to, she would probably lock him into his room forever and throw the key away.</p>

As he watched the tearful reunion, Magnus asked himself again why he hadn't removed the kid's memory as both the Accords and the Clave would have demanded of him. Through this negligence he was indirectly endangering the secrecy of the whole Shadow World and all who dwelled within. And no matter what some entitled Shadowhunters said, Magnus Bane never shied away from fulfilling his duties as High Warlock of Brooklyn.

Maybe it was the hope and sincerity that had gleamed in the child's eyes when he had looked at Magnus and asked him if he was an angel. Maybe it was the childish innocence, because who would confuse him, Magnus Bane, offspring of a demon and human, practiser of witchcraft, who had burdened his soul â€“ if he even had one â€“ with so much sin over the course of his life for an angel, with the epitome of goodness, mercy and grave? Or maybe it was because the boy reminded him of the loss he had experienced as well when his mother had hung herself in their barn when she couldn't stand his sight any longer? And maybe he just wanted to stick it to the Clave and their hubris, arrogance and self-entitlement that had made them from once protectors of the Shadow World to something that closely tethered along the line of an oppressive apartheid regime.

Magnus couldn't say and that confused him. He had always known what

to say and how to act; how to meld himself into the person that others wanted to see. How to disguise, to hide, to conceal until there was only the High Warlock left and nothing of Magnus Bane. But one gaze from those big, round, brown orbs and all these walls came crashing down. There was no defence against the purity of children.

"Thank you, Misterâ€|"

"Bane, Magnus Bane," he answered with his brightest smile.

"I don't know what Iâ€d have done if you hadn't brought back my Simon," the woman continued. Magnus had seen quite a few of her types: Fiercely protective of their children, ready to tear the whole world asunder if it would protect their children even if everything was against them. Magnus held nothing but respect for them. So ignorant and powerless against the powers that were concealed of them â€" demons, vampires, werewolves and Shadowhunters â€" and yet it a motherâ€s love was one of the most powerful things in this world.

"Elaine Lewis," the woman said and held out her hand which Magnus took and shook. Another thing he had learned over the centuries; it always paid off to be polite. You could always be rude later.

"How can I ever thank you for this?" Elaine asked, her eyes shining with gratitude.

"You don't have to thank me," Magnus replied. "Iâ€d like to think that any decent person would have done the same."

"Sadly, this world is full of people that arenâ€t decent," Elaine said and Magnus nodded in agreement.

"Now, Simon." Elaine continued. "What do we say to the man who made sure that you came back to me safe and sound?" The boy who had previously hidden himself behind his mother peeked at him from behind his motherâ€s legs with wide eyes.

"Thank you," he mumbled into the fabric of her trousers, barely audible. Elaine gave an exasperated sigh but she didn't say anything. Magnus crouched down until his face was at the same height as Simon.

"Youâ€re welcome," he replied and smiled at the young boy.

"Now, letâ€s go home, Simon," Elaine said and took the child by its hand. "And don't think you aren't grounded for the next unforeseeable time." She led the boy away and the last thin Magnus heard was a faint groan before the mist had completely swallowed them.

Standing back up from his crouched position Magnus turned around and opened a portal on the nearest wall. Yet, as he walked through it and felt the familiar sensation of magic washing over him, he couldn't shake off the feeling that this wasn't the last time he and Simon would meet.

Both their roles had yet to start.

* * *

><p>When night descended upon the city and Simon laid in his bed, staring at his ceiling where plastic stars shone with their artificial light, he thought about the Magic Man. And even though his mother had been very angry with him â€“ he had been grounded without limit, even though his mother had been the one who wanted him to outside originally. Adults! â€“ Simon couldn't bring himself to regret what he had done. The world, that a day ago had felt devoid of anything alive, that had been grey and sad and so empty without his father, has regained some of its colour. Because Simon knew that there was magic out there, hidden behind layers of concrete, steel and glass. He may not ever see it again and no one would believe him if he told (_he wouldn't, he had promised the Magic Man_) but just knowing was enough for him anyway.

There was magic out there and if he was lucky he would see it again.

And just for this night Simon felt like the most special child on this world.

* * *

><p>Age 6

* * *

><p>Much time had passed since Simon had met the Magic Man. Or at least much time for Simon.<p>

He actually had made a friend. A real friend, just for himself! Her name was Clary and she had the prettiest hair Simon had ever seen and she liked comics as well. Not so much as Simon, but he could talk to her about all his favourites and she would always know what to say. Clary was funny and she lived in a brownstone with her mother who was an artists and sometimes drew them pretty pictures when they asked for them.

Her father was dead, as well, but Clary said that it didn't make her sad because she couldn't remember him anyway. Sometimes Simon envied her for that, because Clary never had to be sad when she thought about him, didn't have to fight this crushing emptiness that even after so much time emerged sometimes at night and clawed at Simon's mind when he missed his dad.

But sometimes he pitied Clary for it. She would never play baseball with her father (even though she would probably be better at it than Simon; Clary was good at everything), would never hear the stories only a dad could tell, because moms were just too queasy when it came to the stories dads would tell.

But Clary didn't need pity. She was fierce and strong and didn't fear the bullies on the playground that always picked on Simon ('_You're shirts are awesome, Simon,' she had said when they taunted him for his clothes, 'they're just jerks who wear boring stuff. I love the Hulk.' And Clary saying that had been enough and Simon had smiled. Then they had continued to throw mud at the stupid jerk-faces._).

Simon told Clary everything. They were best friends and best friends

told each other every secret, because that is what best friends do with each other.

Well, Simon didn't tell her everything. He never spoke of the Magic Man and the one time he had found himself in that house with the beautiful and creepy pictures. Simon didn't tell Clary about magic, because he had promised and Simon would never break a promise. And maybe he also didn't want to share magic with Clary. Maybe he was a little bit selfish and Simon felt bad because of it sometimes.

But then he thought about the pleased face the Magic Man had made when Simon had promised him to never tell anybody and the bad consciousness went away.

Sometimes Simon went back to the place where he found the portal to the Magic Man's house. Back to the little side street where he had wanted to help a girl and found another world instead. But there was nothing there anymore but a decrepit wall with exfoliating graffiti and a bad smelling garbage bin.

Yet, Simon didn't give up. Whenever he felt like he couldn't stand the world around him any longer, he made his way through the neighbourhood and searched every street, every backyard, behind every garbage bin in the hopes that maybe he would find another way. He didn't find any, though.

He just wanted to see magic again.

* * *

><p>There was another tenant living in the house Clary lived in. Clary adoringly called her 'Dot', which was a nickname apparently. Simon quite liked her â€“ not only because of Clary â€“ but also because Dot was always nice to them and gave them sweets when no adult was looking.</p>

Her flat was really cool, too! Dot could read your future in her tarot cards and she had other magical stuff laying around as well, but they weren't allowed to touch that and up until now they had heeded Dot's warnings.

No child would endanger their source of sweets, after all.

It was one day when Simon made his way upstairs to Clary's flat when he noticed the door to Dot's apartment standing wide open.

There was one thing about Simon that was as fundamental as the passing of time or the changing of seasons: He had an insatiable curiosity. So, instead of calling an adult or just simply continue on his way, he made his way to the door instead and carefully pushed it open.

The apartment behind it laid there in complete silence.

Dot's probably with Jocelyn and forgot to close the door, Simon told himself and slowly tiptoed through the hallway until he reached the living room. Dot's tarot cards were laying on the couch table, beautiful works of art created by Clary's mother and Simon couldn't help but stare at them, even though he had already seen them a few times. He stepped nearer and let his finger roam over the cards,

feeling the rough paper and the paint underneath his fingertips.

Somehow, the cards felt special, Simon thought awed.

He looked around when a short flash of light coming from one of the drawers caught his attention. Simon walked over to it and noticed a small purple stone laying atop the drawer, twinkling in the sun light shining through the windows.

I'll just take it really short and put it back, he vowed before he snatched the stone from his place in order to take a better look at it.

The stone was flawless. There were no impurities, no cracks and the brilliance of the colour was consistent with no spots where it wouldn't shine as vibrant. The sun light that fell upon it was broken into thousands of rays, like it happened with one of these prism things they had in school.

Simon would have liked to keep the stone, but he knew that that would be stealing and Simon wouldn't steal. Not even that pretty stone. It belonged to Dot. So he took one last look one last caress and put it back exactly like he had found it.

When Simon turned around to leave his jaw dropped. Right in front of him hovered the same purple thing that had led him to the Magic Man one time before. After all this time he finally had the chance to see the man to see magic again.

It was like Christmas and birthday at once. To Simon's mind there was nothing better that could have happened. He'd see magic again!

Without hesitation Simon stepped forward and entered the portal.

When he opened his eyes again his heart leaped in joy, because his surroundings were exactly the same as they had been the first time he had met the Magic Man. The pictures on the wall, the sophisticated atmosphere that hung in the air and the tapestry that hung on the wall.

Determined Simon stepped forward and began to walk along the hallway like he had done the last time. It was when he turned around a corner that he walked against something soft. He looked up and looked straight into the face of the Magic Men who looked at Simon like he had seen a ghost.

Who knows, maybe they existed as well?

"You again," the Magic Man said with a puzzled look on his face. "How did you even find me?"

"I was looking everywhere for you," Simon started to explain. "Even in some streets Mom said I shouldn't go into because they're dirty. They weren't dirty, though, not like a few of the gardens I was inor the garbage bins." Simon shuddered. "They were really dirty. But garbage bins are supposed to, so I shouldn't complain, should I? And it wasn't that bad! I discovered so many places and I'm gonna

built forts and hide-outs there with Clary and we're gonna be rulers of the street!"

* * *

><p>"You spent the last year searching for me by sifting through every street, backyard and 'garbage bins' you could find?" Magnus repeated stunned. The child in front of him shifted awkwardly back and forth but he held his gaze. "And then you opened a portal in another woman's living room?" He would have to talk to Dorothea about appropriate security measures against snooping children.<p>

"Just wanted to see some magic," the boy mumbled, but not quiet enough for Magnus not to hear. He had to suppress the urge to just flap onto the ground and groan, instead choosing to massage his temple because that whole situation would cause him a hell of a headache.

"Didn't you think that it may be dangerous to go through the streets all by your own?" Magnus inquired and by the sudden widening of the child's eye it probably hadn't occurred to him until Magnus just had spelled it out. Dear God, the boy had absolute no sense of self-preservation whatsoever. How was his mother even able to let him out of her vicinity even for less than a second?

"No?" the boy "what was his name? Something with S|Sherwin, Smedley, Sheldon, Seamus, Sherlock|no, not that|Ah, Simon! It's Simon" mumbled, obviously expecting to be scolded for his actions.

Magnus was at loss at to what he should do. It had been monumentally stupid what the boy had done, but he wasn't responsible for the Simon's action. He could just send him back and be done with it.

But it is kind of you fault, isn't it?_ a traitorous voice inside his mind whispered. _You showed him magic, the world beyond his constricted one, and expected him to|what, just forget it? To go home and never come looking for it again? _

To be honest, Magnus kind of had hoped that the boy would just do that. He hadn't spent much thoughts on the child after he had given him back to his mother (_only when he felt especially bad or when the Shadowhunters came knocking, sneering at and mocking him or when one of his fellow warlocks tried to usurp his position did he think of brown eyes wide with wonder and awe and a timid voice asking him if he was an angel_).

Magnus had done this. He had been the one to spark that fire within the boy that made him seek for more than his world had to offer. Magnus had given him the knowledge and the boy had taken and run with it. He was as much product of his own curious mind as he was of what Magnus had shown him.

And the easiest way of resolving the issue was no longer an option. He couldn't take the boy's memories without dealing him some permanent mental damage. For over a year the idea of magic " the memory of an enchanted house, fireworks and colourful sparks " had taken a hold of the child's mind. Had branched out and taken root in every corner

of the boy's soul. The more he had searched for it, the more he had desired to see it again, the stronger the notion had become until it was irreversible interwoven with the child's very being. Magnus couldn't remove the memory without removing much of the boy's mind, leaving behind nothing more than a living shell.

Magnus was many things, but he wasn't a monster that would do that to a child.

"You won't stop looking, won't you?" Magnus muttered to himself, the boy not being able to hear him. "What should I do with you?" He closed his eyes and took a deep breath.

"Mister Magic Man?" He felt the child tugging at his sleeve. "Can you show me some magic?" Magnus looked down and stared into two big brown orbs that stared up to him pleadingly. "Please?"

He saw no reason to deny the boy's request. The situation couldn't get any worse anyway. Magnus crouched down and held his open palm in front of the boy.

"What's your favourite animal?" he asked.

"'s a snake," the boy answered eagerly. "A King Cobra, because they aren't that big, but they're really dangerous." He was talking so animatedly that Magnus had difficulties following what he was saying, but he could make out the gist of what the boy was trying to tell him.

_Someone's feeling small, hm? _

"Then let's take a look at it, shall we?" The boy nodded. Magnus summoned forth his magic, letting the familiar warmth spread over him, the feeling of home and security, the smell of cherry blossom and fresh lily of the valley, the sound of weaves breaking and birds chirping. Every warlock experienced his magic in a different way — or so it was said — but Magnus just couldn't imagine any other sensation than the feeling of absolute completeness that he was experiencing.

Slowly, he gathered the tendrils of his magic and formed shapes out of it. For the child it looked like a real King Cobra had just appeared on Magnus' palm, even though it was only a miniature version, but to Magnus it was thousand strands of his magic coalesced into one form, controlled by his mind like the puppet by its puppeteer.

"You don't have to fear it," Magnus said to the child who looked at the snake equally apprehensive and fascinated. "It won't harm you." It couldn't. It was a creation of Magnus' magic, an extension of his own self, and it wouldn't do anything without his command. And as Magnus didn't harm children neither would his magic.

His fears laid to rest, the boy slowly stepped forward, stretching out his hand. A little gasp escaped the boy as he touched the snake, his eyes wide.

Magnus didn't know what the boy felt when his skin made contact with the snake that was made out of his magic. Didn't know if he felt the same as Magnus did or something completely different. Did it feel

like a real snake to him? Or like something else (_warmth, soft, cold, hard_)? But maybe Magnus didn't need to know. Maybe seeing that enchanted face, the uncensored, childlike, innocent " pure " joy was enough.

And it dawned on Magnus that maybe he couldn't get rid of the boy anymore.

This boy " no, child " had spent one year always keeping one eye out for him. He never told a soul, always kept it to himself, but he never gave up. And just to see something as innocent as some parlour tricks, compared to what Magnus could really do.

It had been a long time since someone had looked at Magnus not with fear, disgust, deference or desire but with joy that held no hidden motives.

He had missed it.

He had missed being looked at without duplicity.

"Mister Magic Man," the child tore Magnus out of his reverie. "Does it have a name?"

"No," Magnus responded. "It doesn't. But maybe you can give it one." That seemed to delight the boy as his whole face broke out into a big smile. Immediately after, though, it was replaced by an expression of uttermost thoughtfulness. After a while he seemed to have found the right name.

"Lily," the boy said with a firmness that left no doubt about his choice. "Like the flower."

"A good name," Magnus commented. For a while, both " the Warlock and the Mundane " watched the snake as she twisted around in the air above Magnus' palm before he slowly began to pull the magic back into himself. The snake became transparent until one could recognize nothing but her contour and thenâ€¦ coming undone into thousands of blue sparks the snake was no more.

"I put her back where she came from," Magnus explained. He didn't know why, probably to assuage the child. Children were prone to think that something horrible had happened to animals if they couldn't see them any longer, weren't they? He really didn't need a crying child in his home.

"She died, you mean?" Simon interrupted him. "I know what dying is. My dad died. I don't need adults trying to make it sound different. She'll be away and never come back. Just like him." Magnus was at loss for words. Something that hadn't happened to him for decades and the boy managed to do it to him again and again.

"Yes, she ceased to exist," Magnus admitted, looking into these brown eyes that held too much knowledge for someone so young. Children shouldn't have old eyes like that. Not even Magnus had had them until they day his mother had hung herself in their barn.

It is through childrenÂ's eyes that the world is judged, he thought.

"Are you gonna send me back? Like last time?" the boy asked, his voice so small and despondent like someone had taken everything good in the world and crushed it right in front of his brown, bespectacled eyes.

"I have to," Magnus replied. "It's the rules." But as he thought about it he remembered a boy who mistook him for an angel; remembered gazes full of wonder and delight; remembered loneliness fading and faintly, he remembered his mother, watching the night sky with him and as he had asked her why he had to put up with the other children she had replied: '_Because, my dearest Magnus, children are our future. One day you shall recognize that as well._'

"It's a stupid rule," Simon spat with all the derision only children could muster for the things that would withhold the wonder of the world from them.

Magnus thought of Shadowhunters with cold eyes and even colder mind, the Covenant on their lips but bigotry in their hearts. The Law is hard, but it is the Law. He thought about glowing swords in the darkness, friend and foe alike falling and the sneered 'Downworlder' that would always follow.

"You know what?" Magnus said and the boy looked up. "You're right. It really is a stupid rule."

And on this day a pact was concluded between the Warlock and the little mundane boy.

* * *

><p>"Thank you Mister Magic Man," the boy smiled at him, so radiant as if he was shining from within.<p>

"You're welcome, Simon," Magnus replied with a smile on his face as well. Then he stepped back through the portal which soon vanished afterwards.

* * *

><p>Simon watched as the Magic Man â€“ *Magnus*, he reminded himself â€“ vanished, leaving behind an empty street like nothing had happened.

The new weight in his pocket was comforting. It was a physical reminder of what he had seen, of what he had archived; a reminder of the promise that had been made. He reached for it, grasping it tight and feeling the coldness on his fingertips.

Then he pulled it out of his pocket and looked at it. The purple stone laid there on his palm and Simon remembered what Magnus had said.

'_For communication purposes. So that you don't have to go and search for a portal in the unsavoury parts of town again._'

Simon smiled and tucked the stone back into his pocket.

* * *

><p>In-between

* * *

><p>The first time Simon used the stone was on the third anniversary of his father's death. When he couldn't stand his mother's crying anymore or his sister destroying her room in a misplaced attempt at compelling the grieve away he turned it around three times and a portal opened in his wardrobe.<p>

Magnus didn't say anything. Didn't ask for reasons, for 'why's and 'what's and 'does your mother know'. And maybe that was why Simon broke down on his couch, sobbing, and told the other man everything. Because he wasn't intertwined with everything, like his mother was, his sister or even Clary who would always look at him with pity when his father would be mentioned.

Because he just sat there and listened. And that was all what Simon needed. Someone who would listen.

Afterwards Magnus would let him sit on the couch as he went through some of the paperwork that haunted him day and night, as he liked to claim.

When Simon came back home no one had even noticed that he had been away.

* * *

><p>After the second time Simon used the stone, Magnus started teaching him about his world. Warlocks, vampires, werewolves, fae and the Shadowhunters. The Accords, Idris, the Mortal Instruments.<p>

"I brought you into this world," Magnus had told him, his tone loaded with seriousness. "Now it's up to me that you can manoeuvre it."

Never turn your back to anyone, especially Shadowhunters, and never expect justice, especially from Shadowhunters.

Simon didn't think that he would like Shadowhunters very much, if he should ever meet one.

'The Law is hard, but it is the Law.'

* * *

><p>The third time Magnus made him re-sort his library. Or at least its English part.<p>

"There's no system," Magnus complained as he loaded with Simon with books that he should pay special attention to. The boy had to put real effort to not just break down from their weight. "Make one!" He put one last book onto the pile Simon was carrying and then scurried out of the door.

Simon waited until he could hear the sound of the door closing before he broke down, nearly being buried by books when the fell to the ground.

Despondent he looked at the long rows of shelves and sighed.

"That's gonna suck," he muttered and then he started.

* * *

><p>"You don't speak Latin, do you?" Simon denied the question with a shake of his head.<p>

"I'll teach you. Then you can take part of the rest of the library as well." Simon just groaned and banged his head against Magnus' desk.

* * *

><p>"Two-thousand-seven hundred-sixty-eight," Simon growled at Magnus. Said Warlock just raised his eyebrows at the boy, beckoning him to explain further.<p>

"That's the number of books you have," Simon added. "And I'm finally finished." Dread pooled in Simon's stomach as a wide grin spread over Magnus face.

"Oh, my dear, innocent, boy," Magnus purred. "There are still three floors to go."

* * *

><p>It became a habit for Simon. After school he wouldn't just head straight home or back to Clary, but to Magnus instead. By now Simon knew how to get to the Warlock's abode without using Portals (which meant that he had to walk a few blocks were Magnus had installed a door in one of the apartment houses that led to his mansion that '*existed in-between the fabric of space and time*'). There was something satisfying about the old-fashioned slamming of physical doors that could never be replaced by portals, even though they were pretty cool.

Sometimes Simon would continue sorting through Magnus' library (he was in floor two now and his Latin passable enough that he understood most of what was written in the old tomes) and get lost in texts about times and worlds Simon would never see for himself. Yet those books opened windows for him that he could look through to see things that would have been denied him otherwise. Every now and then he would ask himself if that was how Magnus had spent his periods of isolation. By looking through windows.

Sometimes Magnus would continue teaching him about the Shadow World. About backdoor deals, court intrigue and power structures. About which places to avoid at what times, about what people to turn to and what people to run from and *most important* he taught Simon the Accords back- and forward, insisting that Simon had to be able to bend and twist every single word as easily as he breathed the very air around him.

"'_The Law is hard, but it is the Law', " Magnus had recited. "If you can't break their words, they'll break you."—

* * *

><p>Simon was thirteen when Magnus taught him his first potion.</p>

Simon would never be able to activate them â€“ he lacked the spark of magic, this innate energy that made the ingredients react in ways that would lead to effects beyond anything Mundane medicine could ever hope to achieve, but he could do every step before then.

He wondered why Magnus produced and sold potions, though.

"How do you think I earn the money to upkeep all this?" Magnus exclaimed and waved around to indicate at his mansion in all its glory. "Even the High Warlock of Brooklyn doesn't pay the bills. My potions are renowned in the whole world. Nowhere will you find quality of such calibre." He finished with a large flourish of his hand.

"If you add that now you'llâ€|" Too late. A thick cloud of green smoke enveloped Simon, who desperately tried not to cough, until Magnus had mercy on him and banished the cloud with a wave of his hand.

"Well," Magnus commented with a Cheshire cat smile. "Now we definitely know that I'm the only one of us two who can pull off neon."

Clary nearly died of laughter when Simon told her of his 'bathroom accident', his red blush not going well with his bright neon green hair.

* * *

><p>His first working potion was one that would disrupt Glamours that Downworlders were so fond of using on unsuspecting mundanes. It wouldn't last forever and it didn't work on the really strong ones, but it was a start, nevertheless.</p>

"So, they're like your date drugs?" Simon asked as he stared at the purple concoction that he was about to drink.

"Worse," Magnus replied. "Date drugs, they take away your physical autonomy. Glamours take away your emotional autonomy as well. The Fae like to use their Glamours to create havoc amongst the Mundanes. It amuses them to set friends against each other, to tear families apart. Nothing is crueler than a bored immortal being that values nothing but entertainment." Simon swallowed.

"Then I'll better get over with it," he commented weakly and then he swallowed the potion.

Simon had read Harry Potter, okay? He expected the potion to taste similar to the 'soup' he and Clary used to make out of dirt on the playground. Maybe like the one time Luke had tried to cook and they had had to order take-out. But instead Simon's mouth was filled with the flavour of cinnamon, caramel and fresh baked bread. It was an unusual combination, but somehow the potion made it work.

"For every person potion taste different," Magnus explained as if he had read Simon's thoughts (which he claimed he couldn't do anyway,

but Simon was on to him!).

"Well, I'd definitely take seconds," he laughed.

* * *

><p>In one world Simon Lewis grew up with only one friend until a world hidden beneath his own took her away from him.<p>

In another Simon Lewis grew up with that world already a part of him.

* * *

><p>Age 16

* * *

><p>Simon couldn't quite believe it. One time he failed a history test in school and Magnus wouldn't let him help with his potions anymore!<p>

"School is very important," he had said, trying to sound sagely, but the amount of glitter on his face had ruined the impression.

"You never went to school," Simon pointed out quite rightly. Magnus just rolled his eyes.

"That's because I was born in 16th century Batavia," he replied exasperated. "So, until you've read this and wrote me a concise summary of how Clave politics of the 17th century affected the Mundanes and what alternate outcomes could have been, you won't be allowed even near my potion lab." Knowing that there was no way to change Magnus decision, Simon just struck out his tongue at the Warlock, snapped the book from the man's hand and marched back to the study in which he usually did his work all the while hearing Magnus amused mumbling about 'some brat's immaturity'.

Well, the joke was on Magnus, anyway, because Simon would write him an essay that would knock him off his feet when he could make it past one page without having to fight the urge to just fall asleep on the spot.

That fucker! Simon thought to himself. He chose that book on purpose because he knew that it's the most boring shit ever written by someone. Magnus was more devious than Simon had thought.

If I have to read one more word about some ancient Shadowhunter's mistress I'm gonna throw myself out the window, Simon told himself sourly. With a loud bang he slammed the book shit and just sagged into the comfy chair he was sitting.

Maybe if he begged Magnus really nice, he'd be willing to let this whole thing slide? Nah, he wouldn't. Simon let out a frustrated breath and just stared at the ceiling, beginning to count each crack in it, because that was at least twice as interesting as that book.

He had just counted the one-hundred-twenty-second crack when the sound of voices nearby billowed towards him. Simon couldn't really

recognize what they were saying " or even who they exactly were " but guests were rare in Magnus' mansion " at least while Simon was around " and he wouldn't be Simon if his curiosity beat his healthy sense of self-preservation by lengths.

In an instant he was out of his chair and was walking down the hallway, always following the voices. He felt like an adventurer, even though he was just walking through Magnus' mansion.

It's probably more dangerous than any 18th century round the world sailing tour ever was, _ Simon thought to himself as he turned into another hallway that he had never entered before. Magnus' probably wouldn't want him here, but what did an old German proverb say? Was Magnus nicht weiÃŸ, macht ihn nicht heiÃŸ. Simon had looked that one up once. There was no language too obscure when it came to proverbs with which he could talk himself out of the trouble his curiosity inevitably got him in.

The voices, meanwhile, had become more clear. Simon could even overhear some snippets of the conversation.

"Why're here?" a male voice spoke, obviously annoyed, but nevertheless referring to the other person with some kind of respect.

"Magnus hasâ€|.wantâ€|dealâ€|" a female voice answered. To Simon the woman sounded like someone who was used to having things her way. Determined, but also arrogant, yet safe in the knowledge that they were more powerful than those around them. It made shivers go down Simon's spine.

The door that lead to the voices was closed. Carefully, Simon treaded closer, the only sound the blood pumping in his veins.

"Why would he give it to you?" the male voice was laced with disbelief as he asked the question.

"Because," the female voice drawled, "now that everyone is after it, he has to get rid of it before someone comes to the logical conclusion that it's in his possession. And there are only a few that know of ourâ€|past acquaintance." There were some scratching noises " as if furniture was moved " and then silence.

Simon strained himself, even put his ear onto the door, but no further sounds were forthcoming. The voices had fallen silent.

Damn, he cursed, finally something exciting is happening and I can't hear it.

Before Simon could turn around and go back, though, the door was suddenly thrown open and a pair of strong arms gripped him and pulled him in. Head still dizzy, he was pushed against the wall, the hands holding him up so high that his feet were dangling uselessly in the air. When his head finally cleared up, Simon could see that the hands holding him up belonged to a woman.

A young one, looking barely older than twenty. Her long black hair hung loosely over her shoulders, glittering underneath the warm light that the chandeliers extruded. Her skin was pale " pale like those

petite porcelain dolls " which only further empathized the red lipstick on her lips and the black make-up around her eyes. Right next to her stood a boy, of equally pale complexion, his black hair gelled back and his immaculate eyebrows looking judgingly at the woman. He wore a black suit that looked like it had been sewn on the man and as if it cost more than Simon's mother made in a whole year.

"Look, who's been loitering outside the door," the woman remarked. "I could never mistake the smell of fresh blood." She smiled at Simon, whose eyes nearly bulged out their sockets when he saw the two fangs protruding from the girl's upper jaw.

Vampires!

"Camille, you probably shouldn't!" Suit spoke up, but Camille just hissed "she fucking hissed!" at the boy and he fell silent.

"Don't tell me what to do, Raphael," Camille snapped. "It is I who leads the New York Coven, not you."

"Look," Simon stuttered. "It's obvious that you two have some issues you need to deal with, so maybe you should just let me go and talk about it like two mature vampires?" Their heads snapped back towards Simon and the grip around his t-shirt only tightened.

"Now, why would we let go such a fine human specimen?" Camille practically purred.

"That doesn't sound like a compliment coming from you," Simon quipped back even though the close proximity of such a beautiful woman made arousal surge through his veins. Thank God " or rather thank Magnus " for the icky potions the Warlock had made Simon swallow over the course of their acquaintance that made him somewhat immune to the glamourous Downworlders used on Mundanes.

Those potions wouldn't save Simon from his own mouth, though. The Raphael guy's eyebrows had nearly vanished into his hair line, because apparently someone who would mouth at his boss? Mother? Coven leader? was something to feel incredulous about.

"This one has spunk," Camille exclaimed. "I love when they think they can fight." Her smile took a more maniac glint. A clear sign that it was time for Simon to go.

"Camille," Raphael interjected. "We're guests in the High Warlock's mansion. You shouldn't do anything what could be construed as violation of guest rights." Well, it wasn't the saviour action Simon had hoped to receive, but it was better than nothing.

"Don't be such a spoilsport, Raphael," Camille chided. "Magnus probably send him this way as a little present for us." Her fangs grew longer, her face losing its beautiful features and turning more monster-like.

Simon tried to lash out with his feet, but it was like trying to hit a concrete wall for how much it affected Camille. Slowly the fangs came nearer and nearer. Simon closed his eyes. He didn't want to see it; didn't want to turn into a puddle of fear just from the sight of

it.

He held his breath and waited for the pain " pleasure, Magnus had explained, vampires kill with pleasure " to come but it didn't. Simon had read that in time of fear of death the subjects' sense of time became completely uncoupled from reality " seconds that felt like hours, minutes that seemed like hours " but he would have thought that he wasn't one to suffer such.

Slowly, Simon opened his eyes. Camille still stood just in front of him, holding him up, but her eyes were wide open and full of fear. Another hand had wrapped itself around her throat " a hand belonging to Magnus.

"Let him go," Magnus commanded, his voice completely devoid of any emotions, which made it even scarier, because people knew only the joking, sassy Magnus. "And maybe I'll think about letting you leave unharmed."

The tight grip on his t-shirt suddenly vanished and with a loud thud Simon landed on the ground, breathing heavily and relief surging through his whole body. He looked up to Magnus, who was still holding Camille, not a single muscle twitching.

It was kind of awe inspiring, to be honest.

Raphael didn't make any attempt at helping Camille. He just stood there, apart from them with a bored expression on his face, yet Simon didn't believe for a second that he wasn't having an eye on ever move that was made by each of them.

"Now, Magnus," Camille purred, a cheap smile on her face. "Let's not be hasty, shall we? We can talk about this like civilized people."

"Civilized people don't try to kill others in houses not belonging to them," Magnus replied ice cold. "So, I ask you again, why shouldn't I just end you right where you are standing?" The smile fell from Camille's face and was replaced by a cold and calculating expression.

"Because you'd be breaking the Accords," Camille sneered. "If you killed any other vampire, no one would bother to investigate. But the High Warlock of Brooklyn killing the clan leader of New York's vampires in his own home? That certainly wouldn't be swiped under the rug. And then, sooner or later, they would find your pet mundane." She laughed, a dry and mocking sound. "Because that's what he is, isn't he? He has no affiliation to the Shadow World but you. You have told him about us without any reason."

You opened yourself wide up for impeachment, of the more violent kind, if I might add," Camille taunted. "Only that this time " after all the shit you pulled " it won't end up just with you being chased out of town. No, this time they'll kill you. And your mundane probably as well.

So, you see, Magnus, you can kill me and I'd be completely powerless to stop you. But you won't," Camille ended her speech, looking triumphant.

Silence. Absolute, fucking terrifying silence. You could have heard a dust particle falling to the ground and to Simon his own heart beat sounded like canon thunder in his ears; his breath like a raging storm.

Neither Magnus nor Camille moved. They just stared at each other, an invisible battle of wills. Simon felt small and insignificant, like an ant in the presence of lions.

Then, like someone had cut the rope of his puppets, Magnus suddenly let go of Camille who fell on the ground unceremoniously. With grace and poise someone who just had been threatened with death shouldn't have Camille picked herself up from the ground and wiped off imaginary dust from her red velvet dress.

"I knew you would see reason," Camille said. "We'll come back when you cooled off." She turned her smile towards Simon. "Maybe, we'll see each other again."

"I sure hope not," Simon shot back. Camille's smile just widened and then she and Raphael were only a blur of motions; vanishing through the door out of the room.

Neither of them said anything for a while, Simon crashing down from his adrenalin rush and suddenly feeling tired and fatigued. He just laid there on the ground, breathing in and out, just trying to calm down his racing heart.

"Are you alright?" Simon looked up to see Magnus staring at him, gaze indiscernible.

"As alright as you can be after nearly being eaten by a crazy vampire lady," Simon tried to joke, but it fell flat, the horror of the moment still infused within his very bones.

"You nearly got hurt because I wasn't there," Magnus said, barely above a whisper.

"No!" Simon protested vehemently. Simon knew Magnus "he liked to think better than ninety-nine percent of the rest of the world " and even though the Warlock projected an aura of carelessness and indulgence, protecting what he cared about was a duty he took very seriously. And with every failure to do so, the doubt, self-hate and despair crawled forward and gnawed at Magnus' mind. He didn't fail Simon. "It was my damn fault. I left the room and went here, despite knowing that you wouldn't want me to. It's me that deserves the blame. Not you."

Magnus looked at him, daring himself to actually believe Simon, but yet being held back by his old patterns of taking the blame. Simon recognized that he needed a little further shove. "Besides, you saved me, isn't that what counts in the end? Like a damsel in mistress. Do you think I'm still pretty in a princess dress?" It wasn't Simon's best, but the frail smile on Magnus' face told him that he pulled it off.

Magnus held out his hand for Simon to hold on as he pulled him up.

"Pink isn't your colour, Simon, I thought you knew that."

* * *

><p>A soft breeze wafted over Simon's skin, which was quite odd, seeing as he was sitting inside a coffee shop. He looked up from his mobile and the reddit discussion he was currently reading through only to see that the formerly empty seat opposite of him was occupied by a certain Hispanic vampire. Simon let out an exasperated sigh.<p>

"What are you doing here, Raphael?" Simon wanted to know of the vampire. Then: "Why are you even able to be here, the sun is shining out!" Simon looked out of the windows and shit, the sun wasn't shining anymore.

That discussion went longer than I had thought, Simon thought and when he looked back at Raphael, who was grinning at him widely, a clumpy feeling took hold of him. He was defenceless.

"Magnus made it perfectly clear that I'm off limits," Simon said with more bravado than he actually felt. "Thinking about it, so do the Accords." He sent the vampire his best shit-eating grin.

"Believe me, if I could I'd be anywhere but here with you," Raphael drawled. And when Simon said 'drawled' he meant it. Not this 'envious that you beat her at the baking off' PTA mom Helen drawl, but the 'you're dirt underneath me feet and I sully myself just by breathing the same air as you' drawl â€“ though, vampires didn't breathe or did they?

"We have no need for it, idiota!" Raphael replied and, oh shit, Simon had said the last part out loud, hadn't he?

"Then why are you even here, if you don't want to?" Simon shut back. "'Cause you can believe me when I say that I have better things to do then letting myself be insulted by some snobbish vampire with a 'holier than thou' attitude." He couldn't help but snigger. Damit, he was the master of puns! Raphael just rolled his eyes and if he kept up doing it like that, they would be stuck like that for ever.

"The Accords may forbid us from harming Mundanes," Raphael started to talk as if he was explaining something very simple to someone very stupid. "But it doesn't forbid us from conversing with them." Simon gave the vampire his most incredulous stare.

"How stupid do you think I am?" The look on Raphael's face answered that question clearer than thousand words.

"For reason that escape me, Camille thinks that she can get information about Magnus out of you," Raphael explained. "As you and her don't really have a rapport going on â€“" Simon snorted his coffee through his nose at this diplomatic description "â€“ she decided that I had to be the one to go and talk to you."

"Well, that woman certainly is obsessed with Magnus," Simon commented and he took the silence on Raphael's side as agreement. "But doesn't you telling me all this defeat the purpose of making me trust you â€“ which, by the way, will never happen â€“ and spill all of Magnus' secrets into your lap?" Raphael muttered something in

Spanish. Simon didn't know any Spanish, but he knew his innate ability to always find what would annoy others the most, so it probably wasn't anything nice about his hair.

"It is Camille's plan, not mine," Raphael replied. "I won't tarnish myself by pretending that I am actually interested in anything you have to say."

"Wow, Raph, deep wound, right here," Simon taunted, clutching his chest in mock-hurt. From the twitch of the vampire's lips he'd obviously found the right spot to hit. "And I thought we were hitting right off."

"You're the most aggravating, annoying!" Raphael was probably about to add numerous additional more or less insulting adjectives to the list when they were interrupted.

"Simon!" He winced when he heard Clary shouting over the whole crowd in the coffee. "I've been searching for you for hours. Did you really forget that we wanted to do the stupid presentation Ms Crawford gave us? You probably did, didn't you?" Then her gaze fell on Raphael and her mouth fell open.

"Oh, I'm so sorry," she stammered. "I didn't know I was interrupting something."

"What are you talking about?" Simon asked, completely at loss as to what Clary meant. Clary just sent him that look that meant that he was purposefully dense and should hold himself to a higher standard.

"I'm sorry I forgot the presentation! I was just... busy reading a several pages long thread on reddit about Jar-Jar Bings being the true Sith Lord, but even in his head that sounded like social suicide and even though he knew that Clary would never judge him for it, he just didn't want her to think of him as even more of a dork than he already was. Besides, the second-in-command of New York's vampire clan just sat at the table and he didn't need any further ammunition that he could use against Simon."

"I'm so sorry," Clary repeated, this time at Raphael. "And you are...?" She left the question hanging in the air.

"About to go," Raphael answered curtly. Then he turned towards Simon with the brightest smile he could probably muster. "It was so nice meeting you, Simon." And then the bastard winked "he winked!" at Simon and made his way out of the coffee shop. Simon just sat there, completely dumbstruck. What the hell? What was that?

Clary just took the seat Raphael had vacated and grinned at him.

"He's definitely a catch," she commented idly. And now Simon got it.

He nearly fell over from all the flailing and protesting that filled the next few minutes, much to the amusement of his best friend.

"That wasn't a date!" he protested with cheeks burning bright

red. "We don't even know each other!"

"That's what dates are for, Simon," Clary replied, way too amused at the situation.

"He's just the associate of someone someone I know knows," Simon defended himself lamely. "He can't even stand me!" He would have tried to defend himself further, but he knew Clary and once she had found something she believed to be true, she wouldn't let go of it. He just had to resign himself to his best friend believing that he was dating another boy.

You're the only one, he wanted to tell Clary, but every time he tried to say something the words just wouldn't come, his throat dry and his courage suddenly leaving him. One day, Simon vowed, he would be brave enough.

"Simon," Clary tore him out of his thoughts. She took his hand into hers and for one second Simon dared to hope that something had changed. "I'm so happy for you."

Butterflies turned into ash.

"Thanks, Clary," Simon replied, trying not to sound like his world had just been torn apart. "It means so much to me."

* * *

><p>"The girl I love thinks I'm dating you," Simon seethed the next time he met Raphael. The vampire just raised one of his perfect manicured eyebrows.<p>

"How would she arrive at that particular conclusion?" the black-haired boy drawled and for a moment Simon was sorely tempted to just ram a stake up into Raphael's heart for making him that miserable. The moment passed, though; the rage receded and left behind nothing but a bone-deep weariness.

"Can you just stop?" Simon pleaded and hated how weak and defensive he sounded, even to himself. "I'm really not in the mood for you today." He didn't really expect the vampire to heed his request, but when he looked up again, Raphael had vanished.

* * *

><p>If there was one thing about Magnus that Simon didn't know if he should hate or love, then it was the Warlock's ability to just know when someone around him was having a hard time. It wasn't some mysterious magical ability, just good old human intuition.<p>

"You have been moping around for days," the Warlock said in lieu of an actual greeting as he entered the room and sat down beside Simon.

"I have not," Simon replied, but he knew that lying on the couch, surrounded by empty ice cream boxes and comics, wearing only pyjama bottoms and a washed out Star Wars t-shirt didn't exactly support his argument.

"Does your mother at least know that you're here?" Magnus asked. "We

don't want a repetition of the last time you've been here without her knowing, or do we?" Simon winced. Yeah, his mother hadn't been exactly enthused the last time he had vanished without him telling her.

"She knows," Simon mumbled.

"So, do you wanna tell me what got you into this mood?" Magnus probed. "Because your despondence ruins the Feng Shui in the whole apartment." Simon just shot the Warlock an incredulous glare.

"Since when do you follow Feng Shui?" he asked and Magnus just shrugged.

"I felt inspired a few days ago," Magnus replied.

"But you haven't actually moved anything around," Simon pointed out. "And isn't that the point of Feng Shui? To move your stuff around until the world's energy flows naturally through your home?"

"There's your typical Western heathen," Magnus sighed. "As long as I truly believe that the energies flow naturally through my own home I don't have to move anything around." Ah yeah, there was the familiar Magnus pout that Simon knew and appreciated.

"I'm pretty sure it doesn't work that way, Mister Magic Man" Simon commented.

"Don't think you can distract me," Magnus replied. "I myself am a master of distraction and know every trick there is." Simon just buried his head in the couch cushion and tried to will Magnus away with the power of his mind, but sadly to no avail. The Warlock didn't move even an inch.

"It's Clary, okay," Simon finally gave up and said. "She saw me with another boy â€“ whom I don't even like â€“ and now thinks that I'm gay and here only words were '_I'm happy for you'_. "

"Ah, I see," Magnus said quietly.

"It's justâ€¦" Simon gulped. "After all these years I thought that I still had a chance with her, but now it turns out that she never thought about me like I've been thinking about her. And that hurts." He buried his head again.

He didn't want to deal with his. Didn't want to feel like his heart was slowly squeezed to dust, didn't want this ache to overtake his whole body, for this lethargy to take over his mind. He had loved Clary from the very beginning at the tender age of six. He had been there through it all â€“ the fights, the laughs, growing-up â€“ Clary had been the first one he had turned to and he had been the one who would lend her a shoulder to cry on. And through all of this he had hoped that maybe one day Clary would reciprocate what he was already feeling for her.

He didn't want to sound like all those boys who thought that they deserved a girl's love just by being their friend. It wasn't Clary's duty to love him back, to see him as more than a friend just because he was conveniently always there.

It didn't make it hurt any less, though.

"What do you usually do when your heartbroken?" Simon asked. "Maybe it'll help."

"I leave the continent where the object of my affections lives and break off any contact to the outside world for a few years," Magnus responded.

Pause.

"Well, that's definitely out for me," Simon replied drily.

"I guess," Magnus smirked. "There are thousands of other unhealthy coping mechanisms you can chose from, though. I'd skip writing sappy heartbreak songs. That was so 2001. Creating a new image is the hot stuff."

"Creating a new image?" Simon repeated with creased brow.

"Just image," Magnus said, accompanied by grand hand gestures. "Who got his hear broken? Simon, the comic nerd with the plaid, the comic shirts, the washed-out jeans and the dirty converse. Who's gonna show them all? Simon, the bad boy, with the leather, the skin tight jeans and black boots who can kill you with just one look." Simon just stared at Magnus.

"That's really not the time," he snapped, angry that the Warlock didn't take his hurt serious. But as fast as the anger had resurfaced it abated again.

"Besides, I'm not really a leather guy," he mumbled.

"I know that what I'm about to say isn't what you want to hear," Magnus began and Simon groaned. "But it will go away, eventually. I know, to you it feels like you can never go back to how it was. Like the whole world crashed down; like everything around you is gonna drown you â€“ like you yourself are gonna drown in your own misery."

But believe me, as someone who had his heart broken more than once: It will go away. You will heal. And one day you'll find someone new for whom you are ready to go through the whole ordeal again."

* * *

><p>Magnus was right. Like he nearly always was (don't tell him that!).

It took a few days before he could smile at Clary without his smile turning into a sad mockery of itself when she wasn't looking.

It took a few weeks before his heart didn't feel like it was on fire whenever Clary just looked at him.

A few months before he could feel carefree around her again, like it had been once before. A few months and he could again laugh with her, look at her without thinking 'what-if' and 'what could have been'.

Exactly one year when he stepped outside, breathed in the fresh morning air and thought to himself:

I'm over it.

* * *

><p>Age 18

* * *

><p>"So, tomorrow's a big day for you, isn't it?" Raphael drawled. "Mundanes put much emphasis on their 18th birthdays." Simon looked up from the book that was lying in his lap. Raphael wore one of his usual, 'worth more than a family's mortgage' suits. This time in a charcoal that shimmered underneath the dim lights of the coffee shop, making it look like someone had sewn stardust together.<p>

"Still as bland as your teint, Raphy?" Simon snarked back and even after two years the annoyed twitch of the vampire's upper lip was a reward on itself. "And I'd think that even you have heard of birthdays, don't you."

"It were the Great Seven when I was young," Raphael replied, "with 7 you were a child no longer, with 14 you became an adult, with 21 you were old and if you still lived beyond 28 you were lucky."

"That was like back in the middle ages," Simon protested. "You were born in the late 30ies. I think they already had birthdays back then." Raphael just smirked which seemed like it was his default expression and sat down right in front of Simon.

"Does Camille know that you're here?" Simon inquired after he had taken a sip from his coffee.

"She does not care about my whereabouts any longer," Raphael replied.

"Aw," Simon cooed. "Did Mommy and Daddy get into a fight?" The twitching became more pronounced.

"Can I ask you something?" Simon asked. "seeing as it's my 18th birthday and so on?"

"You already asked one," was Raphael's smart-ass reply.

"Hah, hah," Simon deadpanned. "You're a real party clown. Mothers probably fall over themselves to get you on their children's parties."

"No, seriously," Simon continued. "Why are you still coming? Camille probably gave up on ever getting any information out of me after a few months. And yet, you still came back again and again. Why?" Raphael just looked at Simon, his expression indiscernible and Simon feared that he had crossed one of the many invisible lines that defined their relationship. Never too serious, never too deep and when in doubt just use some stupid nicknames.

But Simon had to know. Raphael was a "dared he say it" friend

of his, one of the three Simon actually possessed and he just needed clarity on this. Needed to know why the vampire came every Tuesday to the little coffee where Simon liked to listen to the poetry slams and discussed with him. Needed to know what made him, the human, the mundane, special enough to warrant such attention. The only thing that connected Simon to the Shadow World was his friendship with Magnus and Raphael had long learned that Simon wouldn't compromise it.

The simple truth was that Simon had nothing to offer.

At least nothing worth anything to an immortal being of the night.

"Do you know what it's like?" Raphael asked. "To live your life as a vampire?"

"I don't, obviously," Simon responded, willing to play along.

"It's tedious," Raphael explained. "It's tedious and exhausting. The infighting, the intrigue, the Shadowhunters breathing down your neck, only waiting for even the smallest of excuses in order to execute you, rival clans constantly infringing upon your territory to test your strength and the werewolves' everlasting attempts at eradicating your whole species. It's the same motions over and over again."

You aren't. Maybe that's why I bother with you."

"So, I'm likeâ€¦the boring alternative to your Game of Thrones?" Simon joked. It meant something to him, though, hearing that Raphael considered Simon his reprieve from the Shadow World. Simon always felt like he was only taking from his friends: Clary, who had her talent and her energetic personality and to whom Simon was just the awkward tag-along or Magnus, who had his magic, his social status and his immortality. It was Simon who benefitted from them, not the other way around. That's why it was such a bid deal for him to hear that there was something he could give, even though it was something small.

"I have no clue what you are talking about, idiota," Raphael deadpanned.

"Next time I'm gonna give you the books," Simon narrowed his eyes at the vampire. "You gonna read them and you'll cry with every Stark death."

"Are they another of your 'classics'?" Simon could practically hear the air quotes Raphael was using.

"You know nothing, Raphael Santiago," he exclaimed and enjoyed the puzzled expression on the vampire's face. Simon knew, though, that Raphael would actually sit down â€" or lay down in his coffin, however vampires read their books â€" and go through all the material Simon gave him.

After all, he had turned the vampire in a Harmony shipper.

19 years later, my ass, Simon thought sourly.

"Shit!" Simon cursed loudly, which earned him some irritated stares from the customers sitting at the table around them. Raphael just raised an eyebrow at him.

"19 years later!" Simon exclaimed. "I'm too late! I have places to be and people to see." With a little bit too much haste, Simon put his things back in his bag and took one last gulp from his coffee.

"Before you go," Raphael interrupted Simon's rash departure. "Take this." He handed over something wrapped in brown paper to Simon; from the look and feel of it a book, he would guess. "Happy birthday, Mundane." And before Simon could say anything, the vampire had already vanished into the weakly illuminated night of New York.

Reverently Simon caressed the package, feeling the rough paper underneath his fingertips. That definitely wasn't something he had expected. Hell was more likely to freeze over than Raphael giving Simon a birthday present.

Well, the demons apparently need scarfs now, Simon joked to himself. He put the package in his bag and started to walk towards Magnus' loft, but after a few streets: Fuck this, Magnus has to deal with me coming late, because I need to open it right now. Besides, it wasn't as if Magnus was the most punctual person on this planet either. He would understand. Totally.

So Simon sat down on a nearby bench, weakly illuminated by a street lamp standing quite forlornly next to it and began to unwrap the package with a glee that he hadn't experienced since Clary got him that special Marvel comic a few years back.

Like Simon had guessed, it was book that surfaced from underneath the brown gift wrap paper. But none of those cheaply made Barnes & Nobles paperbacks for 4.99 Dollar a piece. No, it was a small hardcover, bound in brown leather with golden fancywork all over the cover. Abstract patterns, Simon would say, though some of the forms resembled the runes Magnus had shown him the Downworlders used. Right in the middle of the front cover big golden letters proclaimed the title of the book.

"Historarium Filii Noctis," Simon muttered to himself. The History of the Children of the Night, he translated in his mind. Carefully, Simon opened the book on the first page and his jaw dropped in amazement.

The book had been written by hand! Elaborately the words, written with dark blue ink, were nestled upon the page, each letter seamlessly flowing into the next one. The daedal artwork from the book's cover found its continuation on the page, framing the text and making it look like one of those Bibles of old.

This book must be priceless! Simon realized. And Raphael had given it to him. He had noticed Simon's endless interest when it came to all things historical and vampiric and had given Simon a gift that combined both.

He couldn't keep the book, Simon thought. It was worth way too much. He would probably spill coffee over it or something equally

horrendous. That was totally something that would happen to him! And probably exactly when Raphael was present.

But then, Raphael had given it to him. He had parted from the book willingly â€“ it had been his decision to give it to Simon â€“ and he trusted Simon to treat it like it should be treated. And wasn't it really rude to try to give back presents? Simon didn't really want to appear like a rude, ignorant Mundane in front of Raphael.

I'm gonna keep it, Simon decided, and use mom's plastic gloves to turn the pages. Carefully â€“ as if the book would crumble to dust underneath his fingers now that he knew how precious it was â€“ Simon re-wrapped it with the brown paper and put it back into his bag. Then he stood up, slung the bag over his shoulder and continued on his way.

* * *

><p>"Ah, Simon, you're here," Magnus greeted him after he had opened the door. The Warlock wore one of his usual glittery outfits, this one tempered down by using black fabric as its foundation, though. He beckoned for Simon to come in and closed the door after him<p>

"Why did I have to come?" Simon wanted to know as he followed Magnus through the hallways. "It's 11pm. Couldn't it have waited at least until tomorrow? I'm pretty sure Clary has the whole day already planned out and I bet that she hasn't taken into consideration that I wouldn't sleep the whole night."

"Patience," Magnus just replied. "Everything shall be revealed."

"It has to be something pretty big if you're trying to take sagely," Simon joked, which only earned him a heated glare from Magnus.

"Rude," the other man shook his head. "What has the youth of today come down to?" They had reached Magnus' study and immediately the Warlock began to search through the various boxes and knick-knacks that littered nearly every surface. Carefully, Simon cleared a small space of one the couches from papers, which he put atop Magnus' sturdy mahogany desk; a thing of magnificent beauty.

"Where is it?" Magnus muttered as another bout of papers flew to the ground. How someone in Magnus' position could be so chaotic was still a puzzle to Simon. What if he lost something really important, like a peace treaty between werewolves and vampires?

"There's a certain order to my chaos," Magnus said and Simon realized that he must have said the last thing out loud. He should definitely get rid of that habit, he supposed. "I just have to remember it." Another bout of rummaging before Magnus proudly proclaimed. "Here it is!"

Magnus held up a plain wooden box. There were no ornaments on its surface, no golden inlaid work, no carved patterns â€“ just an unremarkable box. Simon's curiosity had been awoken.

"What's it?" he wanted to know.

"Patience, my padawan," Magnus shot back cheekily. "I need to

properly present it. Handing out gifts without the proper presentation is an affront to good taste everywhere."

"Some people would say that your style is an affront to good taste everywhere," Simon pointed out which elicited a gasp of shock from the Warlock.

"Et tu, Simon," Magnus exclaimed. Simon just shrugged.

"Well, then let's continue," Magnus said. He held out the box with one hand while he let the other hover over the lid. Blue mist came into existence around his fingers and slowly sunk towards the box, making it glow in a mixture of golden and blue light. It was a pretty spectacle, Simon had to admit, and then the box opened.

"Take a look," Magnus told him and Simon obeyed.

He looked into the box and what he saw took his breath away. Nestled atop a blood red velvet pillow was an amulet of beauty that Simon could only describe as otherworldly. A cerulean stone that was so clear that it appeared as if Simon was staring into the deep blue of the Caribbean sea. The light that shone down from upon it broke into thousand different rays, making the stone look like stars shone from within.

It was as if a small part of the universe had been captured within.

The stone was framed by bands of silver, so delicate that Simon was afraid of even touching them, fearing that they would break under his touch.

"What's it?" Simon asked in awe.

"It's a Seer Amulet," Magnus explained in low voice, "it allows its wearer to see beyond the veil that separates the Mundane from the Shadow World. It has to be bonded to its wearer before his or hers eighteenth birthday, that's why I'm giving it to you now and not later, and after the bonding commenced it cannot be taken from you until the day you die."

Simon didn't know what to think or what to say.

It had always bothered him that he would never be able to see behind the Mundane World. That he would never be able to see the wonders of the Shadow World; see what had always been part of this world but denied to much of its inhabitants. He had as much claim to the Shadow World as any other Downworlder. He had balanced on its edges for the majority of his life, always dancing back and forth, but there had always been this invisible barrier -- the knowledge -- that the Shadow World could close its gates for him whenever it wanted.

His meagre Sight existed by the grace of the potions Magnus supplied him with.

This gift tore down the last barrier that existed between him and the Shadow World. It would destroy every glamour that was used either to keep him away or to lure him in, so that he could be used as feast for some of the Shadow World's more nefarious inhabitants.

It meant freedom, security and choices. For Simon this was one of the greatest gifts someone could offer him. Even the book Raphael had given him paled in comparison to what Magnus offered him.

"That's what I don't even know! I don't know what to say," Simon stammered, still taking in the amulet. "It must have been expensive!" He didn't mean money. He meant favours, prestige, information that Magnus probably had needed to trade in order to get it.

"Not so much," Magnus replied. "For centuries it was all about separating the Shadow World from the Mundanes. Over the course of time many of these were either lost or destroyed. This I found hidden in another Warlock's home."

"What happened to him?" Simon wanted to know.

"The Clave sentenced him to die," Magnus fumed. "Because they suspected him of practicing Dark Magic and he couldn't convince them of the opposite."

"I'm sorry," Simon mumbled and for a short moment the lightness around them vanished and was replaced by an oppressive, heavy atmosphere " a cloud of dark thoughts " before Magnus continued on.

"That was many, many years past," he said, "and let's not ruin your early birthday present with such morbid talk." He tried to smile, but there was still some lingering melancholy around the edges. "Shall we get you two bonded?"

"Hell yeah!" Simon exclaimed and nearly fell over when he used way too much force to propel himself off his seat.

"Easy there!"

"What do I need to do?" Simon asked eagerly as he stood in front of Magnus.

"Nothing complicated. Just a drop of your blood when I say it," Magnus explained. He looked up at Simon. "Are you ready?" The boy just nodded.

Magnus held out his hand and Simon let the amulet fall onto his open palm. For a moment nothing happened, both of them staring at the trinket, but then, slowly but steadily, the amulet rose from Magnus' hand all the while it began to glow. When it was floating a few inches above the Warlock's hand it stopped its ascension and just slowly spun around.

"Now, let a small drop of your blood fall onto the stone," Magnus instructed. Simon bit on his thumb until he could taste the metallic taste of blood on the tip of his tongue. He held out the finger over the amulet and watched with fascination as the drop of blood fell down.

Blood and stone. Blue and red. A flash of light.

And for one moment the world was bared in front of Simon.

He could see Magnus' magic; a mighty blue serpent that coiled itself around a core of pure white light, its scales emitting so much raw power that the hair on Simos back stood up. He could see the enchantments laid within every brick that the loft was made of; strands of pulsating blue light to which nets of energy were anchored that spanned over the whole building. He could see thousand lights â€“ human, vampires, werewolves, Shadowhunters, warlocks â€“ wandering the streets of New York â€“ burning in more colours that his rational mind could even comprehend.

Simon looked up, through the ceiling and he could see the sky. Now that he could see the sky wasn't dark anymore. Every star shone like thousand burning suns, looking like its own miniature galaxy floating in a sea of glowing particles of dust. Simon couldn't really take all that new impression in, couldn't process them, because those things were never meant for mortals to be seen. He felt like his whole self was torn in so many different directions, trying to understand the new vision of existence.

The moment could have lasted merely for a split second or for hours, Simon wouldn't have realized. Wouldn't have cared. It was like a veil that had obscured his life since its start had suddenly been removed and now he was finally seeing the world as it truly was. Deep down he knew that he could never go back to how it had been.

When it finally stopped it felt like Simon had been plunged into the cold waters of the Atlantic. All the strength left him and he just fell unceremoniously on the ground, breathing heavily.

"You're back?" Magnus asked, "I had feared that I lost you. It has happened before. Mundanes or Downworlders opening their Sight so wide that they went mad with what they saw." Simon looked up at Magnus with irritation.

"And it didn't come to your mind to, I don't know, warn me about it?" he snapped at the Warlock.

"You would have done it nevertheless, wouldn't you?" Magnus just replied evenly. Simon had to agree with the other man, though. No matter if he had known the risks of bonding with the amulet he would have done it. Sometimes the risks were worth the reward.

Still wobbly on his feet Simon carefully lifted himself up from the ground, his hand still clutching the amulet which blue had taken a slightly darker turn.

"Do I have to wear it all the time?" Simon wanted to know. "Or how does it work?"

"It works the best when its somehow in contact with your skin," Magnus explained. "The farther away you are from it the more its effect will lessen."

"Thank you so much, Magnus," Simon said.

"Ah, no need to thank me," Magnus just waved.

"Yes, I need to do this," Simon insisted. "When I was five you could have just erased my memories, you should have â€“ yes, I'm not

stupid, I can read between the lines of the Accords â€" but for some reason, which youâ'll probably never disclose to me, you haven't. And when I came back again and again you could have done it, but again you didn't. You kinda took me in and showed me a world full of magic. I know that Iâ'm annoying, clumsy and don't do well with orders and there must have times where you would have gladly thrown me out just to have some quiet. But you never did. You even defended me from Camille, even though it weakened your position in her eyes. Andâ€|and I just wanted you to know how thankful I am to you for all that you have done for me. How utterly grateful I amâ€|"

"Okay, letâ's stop that before it gets to sappy," Magnus interrupted him, but the smile that had appeared on his face clearly showed that he appreciated Simonâ's rant. "I get it, I get it, Iâ'm too awesome for this world. You wouldn't be the first one to tell me that."

"I bet," Simon murmured under his breath.

"Contrary to what you might think I value your presence as well," Magnus continued, in a quieter and serious tone. "Being High Warlock â€" being a Downworlder in general â€" can be pretty lonely sometimes. You may think that what you are isn't much, that others have to offer more than you, but sometimes itâ's those little things that make all the difference; a joke at the right time, a discussion about inane Mundane pop culture or just an outsiderâ's ear whoâ'll listen to you without hidden agenda." He put on hand on Simonâ's shoulder. "So, thank you as well, Simon Lewis."

Simon smiled at the Warlock. Not even he himself had known it, but these were the exact words he had needed to hear in order to put the last of his self-doubt to rest. Maybe he wasn't as much as some others, but he was enough to make a difference to some.

His thoughts were interrupted by himself loud yawning.

"Maybe you should go home?" Magnus suggested chuckling. "From what youâ've told me that friend of yours probably wonâ't let you sleep for the whole day once she got you in her clutches."

"Yeah," Simon replied and rubbed his neck. "Clary is like that." He took his bag and marched out of the room.

"Happy Birthday," he heard Magnus shout after him as he passed over the threshold.

Simon smiled.

Life was never better.

* * *

><p>That night Simon dreamed of lights so manifold that when he woke up the world seemed so pale in comparison to his dream. He dreamed of connections that were invisible and voids that tore open the very fabric of existence.</p>

He dreamed of everything and nothing and when he woke up the only thing he remembered where the colours.

* * *

><p>"Simon!" Before Simon could prepare himself, Clary had flung herself at him. He had to take a few steps back in order to keep balance and not just fall down the stairs, which would probably hurt much more than Clary's surprisingly tight grip around his torso.<p>

"Can'tâ€|breathâ€|Clary," he wheezed and the smaller female let go of him.

"Come in, Luke and Mom want to congratulate you before we go 'doing those terrible things teenagers do to think they're cool'." Simon could practically hear the air quotes his best friend was using while she hauled him inside her loft.

Standing around the kitchen counter were Jocelyn and Luke, the former looking as vibrant as ever, hair in the same shade of red as her daughter and her eyes shining with the same warmth. Luke mustered him with a smile on his face while he continued to cut the vegetables in front of him.

"Ah, Simon, you're here," Jocelyn exclaimed and walked around the counter towards him. "Let me hug the birthday boy." Soon Simon was engulfed in a second hug and Jocelyn didn't save on her strength either when she nearly crushed ribcage. It was not only in their outer appearance that Fray woman were pretty much alike.

"Thank you, Joce," Simon replied and rubbed his bruised side. "Clary definitely has her hugging from you." Both Clary and Jocelyn smiled at that while Luke just rolled his eyes as he, too, rounded the corner.

"Happy birthday," the other man congratulated and went for the manly handshake â€" which was completely cool with Simon. Then for a short moment when their hands touched, Simon could swear that Luke's eyes glowed green for a split second before they were back at their normal brown again. Simon let go of Luke's hand and shook his head. When he looked back Luke's eyes were still the same brown they had always been.

Must have been my imagination, Simon thought to himself.

"Mom, Luke, Simon and I gotta go," Clary exclaimed as she tugged at Simon. "I have so much planned for today."

"Have fun!" Jocelyn shouted after them before the doors closed behind Simon and Clary.

"Ready to have the best birthday ever?" Clary asked, her eyes brimming with excitement.

"Of course!" Simon laughed. "Lead the way!"

* * *

><p>Luke watched with furrowed brow as Clary and Simon left the flat, going wherever teenagers went when they had something to celebrate. He probably didn't want to know.<p>

"Why're you looking so grumpy?" Jocelyn asked as she wrapped her

arms around Luke's mid-section. "They're gonna be fine, y'know? Neither Clary nor Simon are the type to do something stupid." Even though she couldn't see it Luke raised an eyebrow at that.

"Remember the mud cake incident?" he mentioned, his lip twitching as he thought about it.

"I stand corrected," Jocelyn chuckled. "They won't do something monumentally stupid." There was a short moment where they said nothing and just basked in each other's presence. Luke inhaled deeply. Jocelyn smelled like cinnamon, falling leaves in autumn and art supplies â€“ paper, chalk, wood â€“ and he couldn't get enough of it. She smelled like home.

"It has become stronger," he whispered, but in the now quiet flat it sounded like he was shouting. Jocelyn let go of him and walked around him in order to look him into his face. "The smell around him."

"You mean Simon?" Jocelyn asked him. Luke nodded.

"To werewolves magic has its own characteristic smell," he started to explain. "It's difficult to describeâ€¦like lightning just struck down and electrified the air, like sizzling ozoneâ€¦and Simon is possibly drenched in it."

"He's always smelled a little bit like magic," Jocelyn said. "It was the first thing you noticed when Clary dragged him home for the first time. But he's the most mundane human I've ever seenâ€¦in a positive way of course." She smiled, but Luke wouldn't reciprocate the gesture.

"It was different then," he replied. "Then it was just an underlying smell, one of many, but now it encompasses his whole being. He had contact with some serious magic, not the subtle kind Mundanes can ignore, but powerful and obvious stuff. He definitely has to be aware of it. There's no possibility he isn't." Jocelyn didn't say anything, just staring at him and contemplating what he had said.

"What do you think we should do?" Jocelyn asked.

"You know what I think about the matter," Luke replied and Jocelyn's face darkened.

"I'm aware," she said. "But let's not rehash that old discussion. Can you tell anything about the smell? Something that could help us further?" Luke thought about it; summoned the smell back from his memory and analysed every aspect of it, trying to work out any clues that could maybe tell them something about the origin of the magic Simon had been exposed to.

"There's nothingâ€¦" Luke murmured. Jocelyn's face fell which made Luke only intensify his effort. He was never one to disappoint his love. "Wait, waitâ€¦"

"What?" Jocelyn asked impatience colouring her voice.

"It smells somehow similarâ€¦no, not similar, it smells exactly like you do when you and Clary come back from Magnus," Luke stated. His and Jocelyn's gaze locked onto each other, mirroring the shock both

of them felt at that revelation.

"I think," Jocelyn said, her voice like the calm before the storm.
"That Magnus and I should have a little chat."

* * *

><p>Magnus opened his door and was completely thrown off guard when it was Jocelyn Fray standing on the other side of the threshold.</p>

"Jocelyn," he greeted the former Shadowhunter.

"Magnus," the woman replied curtly. "Can I come in?"

"Of course," Magnus stated and moved out of the way so that Jocelyn could enter.

"I must admit that I'm surprised that you came here," Magnus said as he led Jocelyn to the room in which he usually received her and Clary. "I just renewed the glamour on your daughter a few months ago and as someone under self-imposed witness protection I don't think you'd be one to just randomly drop by." He held open the door for Jocelyn and then followed her into the room.

"You're right," Jocelyn acknowledged. "I'm not here just for idle chit-chat."

"Then, please do tell me why you're here," Magnus replied, slowly getting annoyed at Jocelyn and her stony attitude. He had done nothing to warrant such treatment. He sat down in one of his comfy chairs, looking at the woman and beckoning her to further elaborate with a wave of his hand.

"It's about one of Clary's friends," Jocelyn started to explain. Magnus just raised one of his perfectly made eyebrows at the red-head.

"What would I have to do with your daughter's friends?" he asked of the former Shadowhunter. "I don't meddle in the affairs of teenagers. Too messy." He shuddered. "I'm not interested."

"I think you'll be," Jocelyn. "His name is Simon Lewis andâ€|"

Magnus couldn't help but starting to laugh at that. And once he started he couldn't stop it anymore. He laughed and laughed, because, hell, objectively the situation was just one big case of a clusterfuck. Jocelyn didn't appreciate his outburst, though, going by her stony expression.

"What's so funny, Magnus?" she asked in a tone that, to the unobservant onlooker, sounded calm and collected, but he knew the woman better and was aware that she was about to snap and do something horrible to him and/or his furniture if he wouldn't comply with her question.

"It's just," Magnus wheezed, swiping away a tear from the corner of his eyes. "I can't believe that the Clary about whom I had to listen Simon angsting about for years is the same Clary I rob of memories

every two years for you." Confusion fell over Jocelyn's face as she tried to decipher what Magnus was getting at.

"What do you mean?" she exclaimed. "You admit that you know Simon?"

"I know him since he got lost and accidentally went through a Portal one of my fellow warlocks left open when he was five years old," Magnus answered. Jocelyn just stared at him dumbfounded for a few short moments before she began pacing back and forth.

"That's a catastrophe," she muttered, messaging her temple as if she wanted to starve off a headache. Then, suddenly she whipped her head around and focused her stare on Magnus.

"I spent the last years of my life protecting Clary; keeping her unaware of the Shadow World," she stated. "I won't have anyone jeopardise that. I won't lose her."

"Jocelyn," Magnus said in a voice as if he was talking to a cornered animal. Because right now that was what Jocelyn was: A mother who thought that someone was endangering her child. "Clary will be eighteen in one year; an adult. You can't just forbid her from seeing Simon. You can't forbid her from doing anything after her eighteenth birthday."

"I'll find a way," Jocelyn snapped. "I've lost too much -- sacrificed -- too much -- to let it all be in vain." Her hands were shaking and tears began to collect at the corner of her eyes.

She doesn't want to do this, Magnus realized. He voiced that thought out aloud.

"Of course I don't want to!" Jocelyn roared. "Simon is like a son to me -- he's family! But I -- I just can't allow him to pull Clary back into the world I sacrificed everything to get her out of."

"How about you doing nothing?" Magnus remarked offhandedly.

"What do you mean?" Jocelyn asked confused. "I can't just do nothing or --"

"Or what?" Magnus pressed on. "Simon has been aware of the Shadow World for over a decade now and not even once has he mentioned it to Clary. Or do you really think that your daughter wouldn't have come running to you the moment he had?" Jocelyn seemed to think about that for a while as she didn't say anything, just stared at the book shelves as she paced around the room.

"That doesn't make any sense, though," she muttered, still loud enough for Magnus to hear. "I've seen how he looks at her, Magnus, I'm not blind."

"He hasn't entertained such thoughts about your daughter for over a year, believe me when I say that," Magnus interjected. "For someone who prides herself on her observation skill to miss such a clue -- tsk, tsk." He shook his head. "And if you want to know why he hasn't told Clary, maybe you shouldn't ask me but him that question. Just a little suggestion from my humble self."

"No!" Jocelyn shot back before he was even finished with his last word. "Asking him would only lead to unwanted attention." She took a deep breath. "Neither of us will tell anything to him about it."

"Why should I comply with that?" Magnus inquired nonchalantly, but inwards he was seething. How dare Jocelyn to bring her family drama and pour it all over his personal life. All this wouldn't need to happen if she would just owe it up and confess to her daughter what she had done. Maybe it was justified at the beginning, when both the Clave and the remnants of the Circle were still hounding after her, but now? Now she just took away the choice from Clary. What had once been for her protection now put her firmly at risk, because sooner or later the past would always catch up with you. Magnus had several centuries of life experience to prove that point.

"Please, Magnus," Jocelyn pleaded. "I can only beg of you â€“ as mother who wants to protect her child â€“ that you'll let me handle the issue. Please, Magnus, please." As much as Magnus wanted to deny Jocelyn her request, he knew that he couldn't. Clary was her child, her responsibility, and he held no moral high ground to dictate Jocelyn how she should handle her and her daughter's life. It would be hypocrisy to demand from Jocelyn to stop meddling with Clary's life and then turning around to do the same.

Magnus sighed defeated.

"I won't go out of my way to mention it," he declared. "But if one of them comes to me and straight out asks me I won't lie for you."

"That's acceptable," Jocelyn agreed. Nervously, she looked on the watch on her wrist.

"I should go," she said awkwardly. "Before Clary comes home." Magnus didn't react as she stalked out of the room. Not until he heard the door closing Magnus stood up and walked towards the window, watching as Jocelyn hurried over the street to the small brownstone she had her atelier in.

"I have this feeling, Jocelyn," he murmured into the empty room. "That soon our secrets won't be only ours to keep."

* * *

><p>Age 19

* * *

><p>"Thanks for being our roadie," Maureen said and smiled at Clary as she made their way towards the car.<p>

"Yeah, and thank you for being our artist in residence," Simon joked, but his comment nevertheless made Clary smile. Simon liked it when Clary was smiling â€“ it came natural and made you feel like it only belonged to you, not like those other girls in school that used their smile as weapons to get what they wanted.

"So, you went on stage tonight as Champagne Enema," Clary pointed out smugly and both, Simon and Maureen began to laugh.

"What were we thinking, right?" Maureen gasped out between her laughter.

"But nowâ€|" Simon started, pausing for dramatic effect, "we're Rock Solid Panda."

"Yeah, we are," Maureen confirmed and rolled her eyes. She was probably regretting that she had given Simon the power to name their band.

"Rock Solid Panda, coming up," Clary smiled. "I'm feeling inspired." She took the paint spray and made her way towards the side of the van where there was still free space for the new logo to be placed and started creating her artwork.

It only took a few minutes and a â€“ in Simon's opinion seriously cool looking â€“ logo in red was painted on the van's side.

"What's that tag?" Maureen asked bewildered and pointed at a smaller symbol that Clary had painted above the 'Rock Solid Panda.' Cold dread washed through Simon as he recognized the symbol as a Shadowhunter rune.

How does Clary know a rune? was the question that shot through his mind. He could feel his heart racing and it wasn't because of stage fright. He had worked so hard to keep the Shadow World hidden from his best friends, so how could it be that one of their runes appeared on their band van, drawn by Clary?

"Weird, I didn't even mean to draw that," Clary replied in sincere confusion as she took in the symbol. Simon believed her. Clary was the most honest person he knew. There wasn't any bad bone in her; she couldn't lie even if her life depended on him.

But how does she know the rune? The Shadowhunters guarded their secrets jealously. There was no way that she just randomly spotted it somewhere. Mundanes couldn't even see or draw them.

Mundanes can't, a small voice whispered in the back of his head, but Shadowhunters can, can't they? Simon quashed the voice with tremendous effort. Clary was as mundane as you could get. She was a great person â€“ a strong person â€“ but she wasn't a Shadowhunter. He would have noticed. She would have noticed.

She would have seen things â€“ unexplainable, supernatural, magical things â€“ that she couldn't explain to herself. Clary would have told him. He was her closest confidante after all. She wouldn't keep something like that from him.

"You know, they have confirmed cases of people waking up in the morning and speaking French, and they never even studied the language," Maureen threw in and Simon could kiss her in this moment. At least someone who came up with a logical explanation.

"Do you think that's a kind of language?" Clary asked sceptically.

Just take the explanation, Clary! Simon didn't say it out loud, but

he was thinking it.

"Sanskrit, maybe," Maureen shrugged and then the topic was closed. She and Simon went to the back of the van to put back the stuff for their performance while Clary watched the people passing by. Simon closed the van's doors and went around it to get Clary when he saw her talking to another boy and his heart nearly stopped.

Not because Clary was talking to a boy " that was something that occurred every now and then " no, it was because of the runes that were displayed all over the skin of the boy's body that wasn't covered by leather.

That looks very kink-ish, was the first thing that came to Simon's mind before the horror settled it. No, Clary just couldn't see the boy! She shouldn't. But despite Simon's desperate insistence his best friend just continued talking to the Shadowhunter.

"Has that line seriously ever worked for you?" she snapped at the boy whose expression was a mixture between annoyance and fascination. "Even once?" Despite the fact that the world Simon so carefully had crafted for himself was slowly crumbling down and he could do nothing to prevent it, he had to suppress a smile as Clary continued to tear down the blonde boy.

That's my girl, he thought cheerfully. Before the other boy could say anything, though, he was called by another voice and headed straight for the club's entrance.

"Can you guys believe that blonde dude?" Clary turned towards them, still fuming.

And now Simon was caught between a rock and a hard place. If he admitted to having seen the boy as well it would mean that sooner or later he would have to come clean with Clary about everything. About all the things he knew and had hidden from her, even though they had pinkie vowed when they had become friends that they would never keep any secrets from each other. The world he had half-lived in " filled with warlocks, vampires, werewolves, fae and Shadowhunters " would become hers as well, with all the dangers it entailed.

Once revealed this was something that could never be taken back. It would change Clary's life forever and Simon didn't know if it would be for the best. He didn't know if he even had the right to make that decision.

And maybe " far away in the darkest corner of his mind " there was a small possessive and jealous part of him that didn't want to share what he considered his with Clary. Clary, who was good at everything she did, who could heal the sick with her smile and was always honest and could do nothing wrong.

"You mean the imaginary dude you were talking to?" He had to force the words out of his mouth, desperately trying to make them sound nonchalant. Yet, every word that came over his lips tasted like ash, making a terrible feeling in his gut uncoil.

"No, the guy right there, running into the club!" Clary exclaimed and pointed at the boy's retreating back.

"Clary, there's nobody there," Maureen replied puzzled.

"The guy covered in tats, like!" Clary stammered and it made a stinging pain shoot through Simon's heart seeing Clary like that, doubting herself and desperately wanting them to believe her.

It's for the best, Simon tried to calm himself. It's for her best. Yet, the words did nothing to ease his mind.

"What guy are you talking about?" Simon continued the charade.

"You guys seriously don't see him?" Clary demanded to know, her voice taking one a slight panicked tint.

"No," Maureen answered.

"Okay, could you stop making me feel insane?" Clary asked.

"Could you stop acting that way?" Maureen shot back, slowly getting annoyed by Clary's antics.

"Clary, what was in your latte?" Simon tried to lighten up the mood, but the only response he got was Clary's jacket that she threw at him. "Where you going?"

"To get some answers!" Clary shouted back as she made her way towards the club. Simon didn't think that she would get any. The Shadowhunters would finish their business before his friend would even get near them.

The chances that Clary would find them in a club like Pandemonium were slim to none. Bullet dodged.

"Remember your fake ID sucks!" he shouted at Clary's retreating back.

* * *

><p>Somehow Simon had lost Clary in the crowd that was furiously partying in Pandemonium. He didn't know how, but the red-head had given him a slip and now he was desperately looking for her.</p>

He had to refuse several offers of dances with both women and men (that sucked!), of drinks (that sucked as well) and of drugs (refusing that didn't suck in the least) as he made his way over the dance floor, always looking for the familiar red hair sticking out of the crowd.

But he just couldn't find Clary.

"Looking for that friend of yours?" The shriek that tore itself from Simon's throat was totally manly and dignified "of course" as he turned around and stared into the familiar golden eyes of Magnus.

"What are you doing here?" Simon hissed at his friend, who just rolled his eyes.

"I own this club, stupid," he chided Simon and took a sip from his glass filled with a drink that looked poisonous in its neon blue

brilliance. "So, do you want to know where your friend went or not?"

"Of course I want!" Simon exclaimed.

"She vanished back there," Magnus told him and pointed towards the end of the hall where a separate area was detached from the main dance floor by silver curtains hanging from the ceiling. Simon was about to go towards where Magnus had pointed him, but the Warlock grabbed his arm.

"You know whom she pursued?" he asked, for once his voice dead serious.

"I know," Simon answered.

"Then be cautious," were Magnus' parting words before he vanished again in the crowd around them. Simon took a deep breath and walked to where Clary should be. The crowd parted around him as if it was aware that he was on an urgent mission. As if it could grasp the tension hanging in the air -- the anticipation, the dread -- as if it was knowing that today would mark a turning point from which there was no return.

One last moment of hesitation and then Simon pushed aside the silver curtains. The sight that presented itself to him was like it had been taken straight out of one of his nightmares. Clary laying on the ground, breathing heavily and her gaze full of confusion as she stared at the blonde boy, holding a glowing seraph blade in his hand that was pointed at the burning remains of what once probably had been a demon. Standing a few metres away, as if they wanted to frame the picture, were a girl in skin-tight white dress holding a whip in one hand and a boy who shared quite a few similarities with aforementioned girl and was clutching his bow.

They all stared at Simon as he entered the scene.

"Simon," Clary exclaimed and flung herself into his arms. Once, that would have meant everything to Simon, but the situation had changed so dramatically that there wasn't even the faintest trace of the warmth stirring within him that he usually felt when he was near Clary. "They killed that thing!"

"He can't see us," the blonde spat out depreciatively. "He's just a mundane."

"That's not true!" Clary shot back. "You can see them, Simon, don't you?" Her gaze was full of hope and pleading as she begged him to come out with the truth.

Breath in.

Breath out.

The stage was set. The curtains had fallen.

"Yes, Clary," Simon replied, barely above a whisper. "I can see them."

End
file.